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One day, one goal? PUMA, corporate philanthropy and the cultural politics of brand ‘Africa’¹

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This essay addresses lifestyle sport brand PUMA and its recent activist endeavours with respect to ‘Africa’. Charting a path different from those of transaction-based philanthropic affairs such as (Product)^{RED}, PUMA, the author suggests, has deployed a transformation-based strategy organized around messages of peace and social justice in which supporters are charged with affecting change themselves in concrete interactions rather than impersonally or from a distance. Likewise, the author discusses the role of Cameroonian footballer Samuel Eto’o and his location to PUMA’s mediated efforts with respect to PUMA’s brand footprint on the continent. The essay concludes by noting that while such efforts are a step in the right direction, the story is necessarily a work-in-progress.

We can’t sit around in our armchairs and expect peace to come, because it won’t. We need ... to create the world we want.

Jeremy Gilley, 2004²

We are the change we need.

Barack Obama, 2008

Brand[ing] Africa?

The cultural anthropologist, James Ferguson, introduces his recent book, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, by serving up the following question and answer: ‘What kind of place is Africa? The question, on the face of it, is an improbable one’. He continues, asking: ‘Is there any meaningful sense in which we can speak of this as a “place” ... the unity of a thing called Africa?’ The answer, he suggests, is quite simply ‘no’.³

Yet, paradoxically, as nation-branding pioneer Simon Anholt reminds us, in the popular imagination of the West, ‘Africa’ is suffering from what he refers to as the continent brand effect, because, he argues, there is, generally speaking, a dearth of public awareness and knowledge of the individual countries of Africa such that every country on the continent – apart from South Africa – tends to remain grafted to the same reputation whereby ‘even a relatively prosperous nation like Botswana ends up sharing perceptions of violence with Rwanda, of corruption with Nigeria, of poverty with Ethiopia, or of famine with Sudan’.⁴ This is true especially in the United States, Anholt implies, where the ‘simple message of ongoing catastrophe is promoted with skill, dedication, creativity and

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vast financial and media resources' by aid agencies, NGOs and, most prominently, by the likes of celebrity spokespersons such as Angelina Jolie and U2's Bono alongside far-reaching consumer-based projects such as (Product)^{RED}.⁵ As a result, the branded image of Africa in the West is most assuredly *not* one of '53 individual countries in various stages of development and struggle for independent existence and identity' but rather, as Anholt puts it, 'as a uniform, hopeless basket-case'.⁶

Such an uncritical public understanding we might partially attribute to the relatively ineffectual US media, which has increasingly become consolidated around several corporate power blocs like those of News Corporation and Time-Warner, and whose news divisions operate evermore like Potter Puppet Pal theatres⁷ than like serious bastions of journalistic integrity on the national stage. Indeed, most mainstream reporting of the genocide in Darfur, for example, alternates between watered-down, high school text book-level coverage on CNN or MSNBC, and childish rantings by neoconservative right-wing pundits like Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly,⁸ and Glenn Beck (the latter two of whom continue to occupy prominent host positions on Fox News Channel, suggesting that irony is alive and well). And, when we look at popular media representations of 'Africa', we find, as Natilie Domeisen has chronicled, that 'In tourist offices, the most frequent images of Africa are those of safari animals; in the news, the tragedy of several conflicts linger. On film screens, conflict diamonds take centre stage in one Hollywood movie, and the latest *James Bond* includes African gunrunners.'⁹

Yet, from a cynical-if-not-relatively-successful *promotional* point of view, remaining within such a communication grid has in many ways become the accepted norm for generating charity and promoting charitable causes through the activation of feelings of pity or despair, or what Hannah Arendt might see as the deployment of a *politics of pity*.¹⁰ Drawing from Luc Boltanski, we can understand this kind of intersubjective sentimentality as a political formulation distinguished not by activist notions of social justice but on passive, if not distant, observation: 'observation of the *unfortunate* by those who do not share their suffering, who do not experience it directly, and who, as such, may be regarded as fortunate or *lucky* people'.¹¹ To co-opt Lauren Berlant, the outward expression of such distant observation has forged a kind of Africa-centric philanthropic 'intimate public' within the West – an historically situated collectivity 'created by biopower, class antagonism, nationalism, imperialism, and/or the law'¹² – that frames the 'common sense' understandings of 'Africa' 'we' might hold in the first place.

In this vein, we might do well to think here of the way in which celebrities such as Jolie or Madonna have become represented vis-à-vis narratives about Africa and what many see as their role as interloping colonizers, or in numerous US-based, corporate- and/or philanthropic-oriented Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that aim to shed light on various causes, such as those related to clean water, breast cancer or HIV/AIDS. Take the case of Charity:Water, a grassroots non-profit organization that endeavours to bring clean, safe drinking water to developing nations. In perhaps its most famous television spot, we witness the collision of a maudlin musical score, distant or pensive facial expressions from those in the background, and sadness and sorrow on the part of celebrity stand-in Jennifer Connelly – who is already bound to 'Africa' via her starring turn as war correspondent Maddy Bowen alongside Leonardo DiCaprio's diamond-smuggling Danny Archer in the 2006 film *Blood Diamonds* – providing visually polluted drinking water from New York's Central Park to her children around the dinner table; the PSA concludes with a stark exhortation to contribute money to the cause.¹³ The metaphoric juxtaposition of First World/Third World narratives – here placing the pond in Central Park as a stand-in for some distant, polluted African water source – is a device frequently used to forge an

emotional tie to an otherwise foreign or unknown situation. And, when we follow the web address listed at the end, charitywater.org, we are delivered to a flashy-yet-minimalist site that includes links to consumer-oriented tie-ins such as one by high-end retailer Saks Fifth Avenue for Live Strong-styled black rubber bracelets available for \$5, and white t-shirts with the word 'Water' printed on the front available for \$25. In this instance, like much in the universe of other 'causerist'¹⁴ products, the branded apparel becomes a vehicle through which consumers (for a price) internally identify with a cause, and in turn make such identification a public expression of their 'activist' performativity.

Differently arrayed but with similar intent on a much grander and more ambitious scale, the much-ballyhooed, 2006-launched (Product)^{RED} initiative, spearheaded by U2 frontman Bono and Bobby Shriver (one of John F. Kennedy's nephews long affiliated with philanthropic causes), explicitly moved, as Stefano Ponte and Lisa Ann Richey argue, to 'reconfigure the modalities of international development assistance' away from traditional notions of philanthropy and toward one of transaction-based global commerce.¹⁵ Positioned as a brand identity created specifically to raise awareness and money for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by teaming up with iconic brands such as Apple, Converse, Gap and Dell to produce (RED)-branded, fashion-forward, identity-informing products, the campaign is akin to that of venture philanthropy, in which global corporations selling (RED) products allege to facilitate 'doing well by doing good', as Matthew Bishop and Michael Green in *Philanthrocapitalism* put it, 'conscience commerce' as Hillary Kramer terms it, or 'consumption as the mechanism for compassion', as Ponte and Richey would have it.¹⁶

This *business-model-first* approach is laid out in concrete terms on the (RED) website (www.joinred.com), which contains a '(RED) Manifesto' that states:

All things being equal. They are not.

As first world consumers, we have tremendous power. What we collectively choose to buy, or not to buy, can change the course of life and history on this planet.

(RED) is that simple an idea. And that powerful. Now, you have a choice. There are (RED) credit cards, (RED) phones, (RED) shoes, (RED) fashion brands, and no, this does not mean they are all red in colour, although some are.

If you buy a (RED) product or sign up for a (RED) service, at no cost to you, a (RED) company will give some of its profits to buy and distribute anti-retroviral medicine to our brothers and sisters dying of AIDS in Africa.

We believe that when consumers are offered this choice, and the products meet their needs, they will choose (RED), and when they choose (RED) over non-(RED), then more brands will choose to become (RED) because it will make good business sense to do so. And more lives will be saved.

(RED) is not a charity, it is simply a business model. You buy (RED) stuff, we get the money, buy the pills and distribute them. They take the pills, stay alive, and continue to take care of their families and contribute socially and economically in their communities.

If they don't get the pills, they die. We don't want them to die. We want to give them the pills. And we can, and you can, and it's easy.

All you have to do is upgrade your choice.¹⁷

What we see here, as Jessica Bennett writes, is the promotion of a 'commodity context'¹⁸ in which '[a]ctivism is the new chic, and we, the consumers, have become the new activists – saving the world one credit-card transaction at a time'.¹⁹ In terms of (RED), its commodity context is that in which 'the thing to be exchanged is equated to the lives of African AIDS patients, *as well as* to the market price paid by consumers'.²⁰ Solely from the perspective of raising funds for its stated causes, the (RED) project has been unquestionably successful; according to its own press materials, the three-year campaign has thus far raised a total of USD\$130 million.²¹ However, Mya Frazier of *Advertising Age*

magazine speculated in early 2007 that the ‘collective marketing outlay by GAP, Apple, and Motorola for the (RED) campaign’ for the then-one-year-old campaign had already reached close to \$100 million (though others, such as Paul Valley claimed that number was closer to USD\$30 million).²² In any event, we can submit that that campaign has at the least resulted in millions of dollars of philanthropic capital funnelled to the Global Fund, whatever the initial marketing outlay might actually have been.

But there is more to it than a simple numbers game. As Juliana Mansvelt reminds us, initiatives such as (RED) open up a space

in which *citizenship* is produced through consumption practice with specific commodities and the social practices surrounding them providing a starting place for reflection on the regulation and surveillance of public space ... a righteous shopping community which emphasizes moral citizenship and the entrepreneurial self, while removing both real and imagined disruptive potentialities.²³

Indeed, if we look to the ‘(RED) Manifesto’ itself, First World/Western/neoliberal capitalism and its purveyors are positioned in a normative light vacant from any discussion of how such an enterprise itself potentially contributes negatively to the current conditions governing poverty, health or international image relative to the African continent. That is to say, following Katarina Jungar and Elaine Salo, the (RED) campaign ‘employs heroic language which implies that those who support it are the “saviors” of its beneficiaries. The affective impact of this language, however, comes at the cost of recycling stereotypical images of Africa and the ‘Third World’ and constructing northern consumers as “good Samaritans”.’²⁴ Not only that, but the ‘samaritanization’ of the West may further contribute to the formation of ‘recuperative histories ... in which certain white figures come to stand for an alternative tradition of colonialism – one with which guilty white Australians, New Zealanders, North Americans and “metropolitan” Britons, among others, can identify in their attempts to disown an apparently more shameful colonial past’.²⁵ One major result of the above-mentioned dialectical positioning is that ‘shopping for a better world’ is now more than ever ‘entrenched in the consumer ethic’.²⁶ Which is to say, writes Krishna Lalbiharie, the dominant narrative is now positioned as one in which

buying a bottle of Starbucks Ethos water will resultantly deliver clean water to ‘children of the world’; owning a pink Kitchen Aid mixer brings with it promises of a cure for breast cancer; and Ben and Jerry’s ‘American Pie’ brand ice cream urges buyers to support its campaign to redistribute U.S. federal budget monies towards the betterment of sick children.²⁷

One could argue, then, as Heather Havrilesky does, that by ‘trivializing the tragic, we reduce its proportions enough to put it behind us’²⁸ – social activism replaced by simple consumerism, the promotion of corporate capitalism over grassroots participation. Or, as Colleen O’Manique and Ronald Labonte, writing in *The Lancet* put it, an act in which the ‘seemingly just *consumer* supplants the just *citizen* and social justice itself is commodified’.²⁹ Samantha J. King sums it up for us:

The significance attributed to [quick, convenient and relatively inexpensive acts of giving] stems in large part from their association with ideals of active citizenship, or from the notion that citizenship in the contemporary moment should be *less* about the exercising of rights and the fulfilment of obligations and *more* about fulfilling one’s political responsibilities through socially sanctioned consumption and responsible choice.³⁰

However, change *may* be afoot, with a move *away* from *transaction*-based corporate philanthropic efforts (i.e., where the purchase of products and a percentage donation of the profit is passed along to a charitable cause or initiative is considered the overriding focus, as in the aforementioned examples) and a move *toward* that of *transformation*-based

efforts starting to appear more and more frequently. That is, efforts that are organized around individuals themselves becoming personally invested in, and actively participating at, the grassroots level in such efforts that aim to paradigmatically shift elements of the social order.³¹ In this framework, buying a branded product isn't the first, last and only act of philanthropic citizenship engaged in by an individual. Rather, such an act might not even exist.

Although the ultimate efficacy of such a move remains unclear, it would appear that there is at least cautious reason to be optimistic (if ever such a thing could be said about placing trust in a corporate entity to 'do the right thing'). In the remainder of this essay, I outline one such brand that has endeavoured to begin moving in this direction – the lifestyle athletic brand PUMA – and explore its relationship to approaching 'Africa' not so much as a place without hope, but rather as an opportunity for revitalization. Specifically, I want to look at the intersection of three competing discourses: 1) PUMA's brand identity vis-à-vis Africa in an age of conscience commerce; 2) its sponsored association with filmmaker-activist Jeremy Gilley's 'Peace One Day' and 'One Day, One Goal' movements; and 3) its use of Cameroonian footballer Samuel Eto'o in its Africa-related ad campaigns.

PUMA goes to Africa

I believe in the responsibility to contribute to a better world for the generations to come.

Jochen Zeitz, CEO, PUMA³²

PUMA, the fourth-largest athletic apparel company in the world, has in recent years, and as part of its Phase IV long-term brand development strategy intended to 'reinforce its position as one of the leading multi-category Sportlifestyle brands'³³ in the world, implemented or adopted numerous corporate sustainability measures that seek to orient the brand as a socially conscious entity. Such moves include publicly declaring adherence to the 10 Global Compact Principles of the United Nations Global Compact – a framework for business committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. In line with this effort, PUMA created an internal set of standards throughout its production and supply chain, known as the SAFE Concept (which stands for Social Accountability and Fundamental Environmental Standards), and has normalized its business operations around what it refers to as its five core pillars: transparency, dialogue, evaluation, social accountability and sustainability.³⁴ From a business operations standpoint, these initial efforts resulted in PUMA gaining entry to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index in the United States (the first global index to track the financial performance of the leading sustainability-driven companies worldwide) and the FTSE Socially Responsible Investment Index in the United Kingdom (which performs a similar function of tracking companies that 'meet globally recognized corporate responsibility standards'³⁵). Likewise, GoodGuide.com, a Certified B corporation founded by Environmental Science and Policy Professor Dara O'Rourke at the University of California-Berkeley that charts the health, environmental and social impacts and performances of corporate entities, gives PUMA generally favourable ratings in the areas of its global warming policy, energy and environmental management, workplace conditions, labour policy (non-supply chain), community engagement and corporate ethics.³⁶

Recent events organized under the banner of PUMA's social responsibility engagement also include such diverse arrangements as its partnership with the US-based Soles4Souls initiative, which is oriented to provide footwear to those in need through the

direct peer-to-peer giving of shoes; its scholarship programme at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design in London; and laudable internal efforts such as Charity Cat, a volunteer organization formed by 20 PUMA employees to lend time and technical expertise to humanitarian-oriented projects.

Of particular note, and on the largest scale with respect to this public re-branding of PUMA as a *self-avowed* socially-conscious, forward-thinking corporate citizen, has been its efforts related to Africa over the last several years (since at least the run-up to the 2006 World Cup), which have been revealed most notably in its expansionary efforts toward the continent through a series of sponsorship agreements with various national teams and through endorsement deals with football stars such as Samuel Eto'o of Cameroon (who plays for Spanish *La Liga* club FC Barcelona). Somewhat remarkably, PUMA's efforts have, with some minor exceptions detailed shortly, approached Africa not as a charity case to be pitied, *per se*, but as an untapped marketplace and, more importantly, potential vehicle for the realization of *social change* narratives to emerge, what we might consider a transformational – rather than transactional – approach to commerce.³⁷

Jochen Zeitz, CEO of PUMA, situated its brand strategy regarding Africa in this fashion:

For us it [the Africa plan] is just part of who we are and what we do. We are about innovation and we want to look at new ways of moving the brand and our product forward and we believe there is tremendous excitement in Africa – we want to use that as part of our self-expression. It's about passion, colorfulness and diversity. To bring Africa to the rest of the world or innovation throughout Africa is an approach that no one has ever selected before. And that's why we got so heavily involved.³⁸

These efforts have taken on a tripartite approach: 1) an African-themed advertising campaign featuring Eto'o combined with opening PUMA retail outlets in various African countries, such as the Accra Mall in Ghana (the first 'world class shopping centre' in the country); 2) sponsorship of various African national football clubs and the production of branded apparel of both the traditional and limited-edition charitable iterations; and 3) its involvement with Jeremy Gilley's Peace One Day campaign.

According to PUMA's own press archive, these endeavours are positioned, in the sense of media promotion, for increasing PUMA's brand footprint *in Africa*, and can be traced to efforts begun during the 2006 World Cup held in Germany. It was during that World Cup that PUMA first entered into a joint partnership with the charitable organization United for Africa to, in its own words, 'raise international awareness for the 30 aid organizations that came together in the concerted campaign United for Africa'.³⁹ On PUMA's part, this involved the creation of a PUMA Charity Collection complete with fashion-show launch party, a retail entertainment tram running on select routes throughout Berlin promoting United for Africa, and sponsorship of a music CD/coffee-table book collection focusing on African musicians and featuring artwork by the Nigerian fashion photographer Andrew Dosunmu. In a similar vein, numerous events and shows with celebrity artists and sportspersons took place in and around Berlin's historic Café Moskau (PUMA's *de facto* football headquarters during the World Cup), which further served to raise awareness for United for Africa.

It can be argued that one of the main motivating forces behind this alignment is PUMA's long-term focus on 2010, when the World Cup is to be held in South Africa. As noted in a corporate press release dated 15 June 2006, 'World Cup 2006 might not be over yet but ... now, it is time for us to move on to the next project: the World Cup in South Africa'.⁴⁰ The release continued, 'PUMA will in the coming four years strive to strengthen its strong, positive position in Africa ... For many this may seem to be a daunting task,

but thankfully PUMA's efforts have already paid off as we are already indisputably the most visible football brand in Africa.'⁴¹ Ghana Football Federation President Kwesi Nyantakyi later concurred with the positive effects of such a partnership, stating: 'We are proud to be partners with such a global brand that has made a commitment to football in both Ghana and the African continent on the whole.'⁴²

Moving forward two years hence, to 2008, PUMA outfitted 9 of the 16 African nations competing at the Africa Cup of Nations held in Egypt. It was here that PUMA solidified its brand footprint in Africa, heavily promoting sponsorship deals with Ghana, Cameroon, Egypt, Tunisia, Senegal, Morocco and others. The result was, in PUMA's own words, that 'PUMA gained brand visibility throughout 87.5% of the tournament, showing the strongest brand visibility on the pitch of all sport apparel companies . . . In the semi-finals, all teams were supplied by PUMA, making us the most prominent brand.'⁴³

In fairness, the above moves represent a fairly benign approach to situating the PUMA brand in and around Africa, intended to appeal to a new wave of African consumers hoping to participate in the fruits of global capitalism at locations such as the Accra Mall in Ghana. Indeed, PUMA South Africa Managing Director, Ronald Rink, is clear on this point, stating with respect to the opening of a similar PUMA store in Cape Town's Canal Walk Shopping Centre: 'The launch of the PUMA store in South Africa is in line with PUMA's global strategy to grow it's [*sic*] presence in Africa.'⁴⁴

However, 2008 also marked a fundamental shift *away* from the traditional sponsorship-oriented charitable foundation strategy seen in 2006, as PUMA opted instead to forge a partnership with peace activist/filmmaker Jeremy Gilley's 'Peace One Day' venture, which aims to reserve one day per year, 21 September, as a day of global cease-fire and non-violence celebration. Although PUMA once again produced *some* branded merchandise to commemorate the partnership, such as the so-called 'Peace One Day fan pack' (featuring a branded soccer ball, t-shirt, lanyard, etc.) and nation-specific shoes (i.e., PUMA shoes designed in the colours of a particular nation's flag), these efforts were seen more as ancillary promotional by-products of the overall effort rather than a primary focus.

Instead, what we saw was the lofty notion of international peace and consciousness raising activity, organized around the aptly titled 'One Day, One Goal' campaign. As part of the promotional campaign, PUMA's Zeitz explained the relationship between the two parties in this manner (filmed as part of a media-promotional package freely distributive to broadcasters and via YouTube and other online sites):

When people play sport, when they compete, they don't fight. I think if you look into the history of sports, ever since sports have been played, the war stopped. Let's bring people together, through sport, just like we do during the European Cup, the World Cup, but let's do it for a purpose. And 'Peace Day' is a great purpose . . . Peace is something that must concern all of us. And the wonderful thing about peace one day is that it's just not focusing on governments, and parties at war, or countries at war, it's something that engages everyone. That creates awareness that everyone can contribute to peace, no matter how small . . . I think that's the whole idea we have together, to make sure that conflicting parties and countries play football against each other starting September 21st every year. And it's not something that we're doing in order to promote the brand, in order to promote the company, it's just using the power we have as a company to actually help make the world, make it a bit better. And therefore I believe that sport can really help achieve peace not only one day but maybe on more days also in the future.⁴⁵

Putting aside the problematic revisioning of history⁴⁶ and the almost *too* lofty sounding sentiment concerning participation being not simply about promotion of the brand

embedded in Zeitz's explication, the strategy employed by PUMA in association with the Peace One Day/One Day, One Goal movement is closely aligned with what Kate Nash, channelling Boltanski, frames as a politics of *justice*: that is, an affective mobilization of *human* capital oriented around 'the denunciation of systemic injustice, for which the appropriate emotion is indignation and the desire to bring about change'.⁴⁷ Rather than *passive* consumption geared toward raising money and awareness – as well as outward branded expressions of one's own philanthropic efforts – the aim would appear to be the much more powerful end result of 'transform[ing] national citizens into global citizens by creating *obligations* toward people ... outside the nation'.⁴⁸ In other words, to invoke Colleen O'Manique and Robert Labonte, establishing a paradigmatic order in which we as *consumers* recognize that we may not be able to 'change the course of history on the planet. But as politically engaged, informed *citizens* pushing for a just global order, we perhaps do have some agency'.⁴⁹

* * *

At the same time as PUMA was engaged in helping to foster grassroots activism and awareness for Gilley's project, it was simultaneously employing via endorsement contracts African footballers to spread its twinned message(s) of peace and capitalism. Enlisting Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o, who starred for FC Barcelona until a 2009 move to Inter Milan, was the lynchpin of this strategy. Considered perhaps the most celebrated African footballer, Eto'o starred in a series of ads promoting PUMA products within *both* Europe and Africa, acting as a 'critical functionary performing the totemic work of Brand Aid', an 'emotional sovereign'⁵⁰ speaking as both global football star who has suffered under racist attacks (for example, his treatment by fans during an away match at Real Zaragoza in Aragon, where he was subjected to racist taunts, 'monkey-like' chants, and fans throwing peanuts at him on the pitch, quite reminiscent of the John Barnes 'banana' incident in Liverpool v. Everton in the late-1980s in the then-First Division of English football), and a politically aware spatial representative of 'Africa' (i.e., Cameroon) who has stated publicly that while he is glamorized for being a celebrity athlete: 'Away from the cameras, a black man is suffering from racism and nobody cares – and that's the problem.'⁵¹ And, as an athlete-activist, the French-speaking Eto'o has also spoken publicly about the need to proactively use advertising and media as a catalyst for mobilizing change rather than via the use of sporadic actions or 'pity'.

Clearly, PUMA did not enter into a relationship with Eto'o unaware of his politically-aware mindset. Rather, it could be said that his extra-textual politics of representation in fact *aid* in symbolically bestowing an activist-minded imprimatur on the PUMA label. Given such an association, it is quite disappointing that PUMA has in effect fallen back on racial stereotypes of the black male athlete when deploying Eto'o in its various advertising campaigns.

Consider: In one prominent ad, titled 'My PUMAs',⁵² we see a shirtless Eto'o (naked, actually, but not yet visibly so to the camera's gaze) in a locker room-type shower, presumably washing up after a hard match or practice. In the next shot, we see a light-skinned boy of about 13-years-of-age sneak into the locker room and abscond with Eto'o's clothes and bright red PUMA shoes. Finished showering, Eto'o emerges to find his locker empty, and goes outside to presumably look for his missing clothes. There he finds a group of six light-skinned boys kicking around a soccer ball on a dirt pitch. Seeing one of the boys wearing his shoes, the muscular Eto'o, his body dripping with water and sexual energy, lets fly with a resounding scream of 'Aarrrrgghhhhhh!' followed by a declarative, 'My PUMAs!' The boy slowly takes off the shoes, and then he and the other five run away

from Eto'o. The last scene shows a full-body shot of Eto'o, wearing only his red and white PUMAs, walking naked away from the camera, his backside clearly visible to the camera.

If this was a one-off depiction of the aggressive, black male body by PUMA, one might be able to dismiss it as clumsy creative masquerading as (a failed attempt at) playful storytelling. However, Eto'o was likewise featured in a major television advertisement for PUMA titled 'Until Then', which featured a futuristic game of football being played by half-man, half-animal combatants. Aired in heavy rotation during the 2008 Africa Cup of Nations tournament, the ad is evermore explicit about the conjoining of 'man' and 'beast' narratives, especially disturbing when we consider the long history of stereotypical media representations of black men as naturally aggressive and/or animalistic in nature. (A cousin to the 'Until Then' ad is an animated short that literally depicts Eto'o morphing into an angry puma on the pitch, complete with roaring, bestial sound effects; a similar entry in this animated series has Eto'o playing one-on-one with a lion in what appears to be the Sahara desert.)

What are we to make of the seemingly contradictory messages at play with respect to Eto'o – one that raises him up as a politically-aware and socially-motivated activist-athlete on the one hand, and one that portrays him as a bestial stereotype of aggressive black masculinity on the other hand? Perhaps we can chalk it up to this: At the same time PUMA has endeavoured to treat Africa as an emerging market with a unique history full of untapped potential, the politics of representation governing the very same context in which it resides has not yet caught up to its (potentially) progressive promise. Thus they've only gone halfway – Africa is no longer a site to be pitied, but to become engaged with in order to produce change; its emerging markets – consumers to engage with; its communication matrix – still stuck in a Western mode of racial politics. But change *is* afoot, if slowly, and with a lot of baggage.

By way of a conclusion

Africa's participation in 'globalization', then, has certainly not been a matter of simply 'joining the world economy' ... it has instead been a matter of highly selective and spatially encapsulated forms of global connection combined with widespread disconnection and exclusion.

James Ferguson⁵³

In an age in which the global corporation 'has evolved to serve the interests of whoever controls it, at the expense of whomever does not', PUMA's initial first steps toward inserting itself into discussions concerning peace and social change on a global scale are indeed laudable.⁵⁴ This is especially true when we consider some of the alternatives, such as those outlined above with respect to 'conscience commerce' and 'causumerism'. Although PUMA's efforts have at times been clumsy (sometimes overly so, such as the Eto'o campaigns), that it is seemingly trying something different at all is noteworthy. Whilst such a statement may smack of the kind of cynical times we reside in, especially here in the United States (i.e. actually being surprised when a global entity even *attempts* to act with regard to the common good instead of unleashing the ravages of global capitalism upon us all), it should not obscure those efforts undertaken by PUMA. In the concluding run-up to World Cup 2010, it will be interesting to see how PUMA acts and reacts to the changing historical present, as well as how its efforts are received in the African soccer community as well as the world community more generally. For now, however, PUMA's efforts remain an incomplete, though promising, story.

Notes

- ¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented under a slightly different title at the 'To Remember is to Resist': 40 Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968–2008 conference, held in Toronto, Canada, in May 2008. Special thanks to Russell Field and Bruce Kidd for organizing the conference, and for their patience with me during the editorial process. The author also thanks Fiona Söderberg for lively discussions concerning this project.
- ² BBC Storyline, 'Director Interview'.
- ³ Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, 1.
- ⁴ Anholt, 'Bono, Public Diplomacy', 1
- ⁵ Anholt, 'Branded Africa', 75.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 76
- ⁷ This refers to a theatre of the absurd and is taken from the viral phenomenon of the same name, seen most notably in this clip, which has been viewed more than 60 million times on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tx1XIm6q4r4>.
- ⁸ See, for example, O'Reilly's 26 January 2009 screed against President Barack Obama signing an Executive Order rescinding the so-called 'global gag rule' (a policy left over from the Bush administration) which prohibited US funding to organizations that spoke about abortions for women and girls seeking reproductive and family planning services. This policy was of particular import in debates concerning HIV/AIDS in Africa, where the de facto result was only those organizations promoting abstinence-only programmes – which don't work – could be funded.
- ⁹ Domiesen, 'Changing "Brand Africa"', 1.
- ¹⁰ Arendt, *On Revolution*.
- ¹¹ Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*, 3.
- ¹² Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 8.
- ¹³ Ad available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AqLLyLeJuQ>.
- ¹⁴ Sarna-Wojcicki, 'Refigu(red)', 14.
- ¹⁵ Ponte and Richey, 'Better (RED)TM than Dead', 1.
- ¹⁶ Bishop and Green, *Philanthrocapitalism*, 3; Kramer, *Ahead of the Curve*, 71; Ponte and Stefano, 'Better (RED)TM than Dead', 2.
- ¹⁷ The campaign has since altered slightly its public description and dropped the use of the word 'manifesto' on its website.
- ¹⁸ This is Appadurai's (1986) term.
- ¹⁹ Bennet, 'The Rage Over (RED)', 1.
- ²⁰ Sarna-Wojcicki, 'Refigu(red)', 17, my emphasis.
- ²¹ (RED) Press Office, '(RED) Results'.
- ²² Frazier, 'Costly (RED) Campaign', 1. Less certain, however, is the monetary value of awareness raised for the cause itself. For a (somewhat biased) rebuttal to Frazier's claims, see Paul Valley, 'The Big Question: Does the (RED) Campaign Help Big Western Brands More Than Africa?' *The Independent* (London), March 9, 2007, 1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/the-big-question-does-the-red-campaign-help-big-western-brands-more-than-africa-439425.html>.
- ²³ Mansvelt, 'Geographies of Consumption', 106, my emphasis.
- ²⁴ Jungar and Salo, 'Shop and Do Good?', 93.
- ²⁵ Lambert and Lester, 'Geographies of Colonial Philanthropy', 321.
- ²⁶ Lalbiharie, 'Can Bono', 1.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.* For the definitive statement on the consumerist approach to philanthropy, see King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*
- ²⁸ Havrilesky, 'The Selling of 9/11', 1.
- ²⁹ O'Manique and Labonte, 'Rethinking (Product)RED', 1562, my emphasis.
- ³⁰ King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, 73.
- ³¹ The preeminent example of this shift was seen in US politics during the 2008 Presidential election campaign. Whereas such traditional campaigns as those ran by Hillary Clinton or John McCain utilized online technology primarily as a means of raising large sums of money, the campaign of Barack Obama deployed the same basic technology on hand as the means to activate and organize supporter energy to go out into the real world, knock on doors, write letters, host house parties, talk to people, and shift the dynamics of the race in meaningful ways not accessible through dollar donations alone. In short, people were charged with affecting change themselves in concrete

interactions rather than impersonally, from a distance. For more on this see Giardina, 'From Howard Dean'.

³² Cited in Margareta Pagano, 'So Hip it Hurts. Can PUMA Leave the Recession for Dead?'. *The Independent*, February 1, 2009. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/so-hip-it-hurts-can-puma-leave-the-recession-for-dead-1522255.html>.

³³ PUMA Press Office. 'PUMA Announces Strategic Directions', 1.

³⁴ PUMA notes that this programme is accredited by the Fair Labor Association, a non-profit industry watchdog group. However, it should be pointed out that the FLA has come under recent criticism by such organizations as United Students Against Sweatshops, which calls it a 'weak code that fails to provide for women's rights, a living wage, and the full public disclosure of factory locations – in other words, more corporate cover-up than industry reform' (http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=9).

³⁵ FTSE: The Index Company, 'FTSE4Good Index Series'. http://www.ftse.com/Indices/FTSE4Good_Index_Series/index.jsp.

³⁶ GoodGuide.com, 'PUMA AG Rudolph Dassler Sport'. <http://www.goodguide.com/companies/209630-puma-ag-rudolph-dassler-sport/details>

³⁷ In his revealing look at the 2004 US Presidential election, Joe Trippi, *The Revolution*, outlines the shift from the 'tyranny of transactional politics' to the progressive 'transformational politics' that governed Howard Dean's campaign for the Democratic Party nomination.

³⁸ PUMA Press Office, 'Q&A with PUMA CEO', 1.

³⁹ PUMA Press Office, 'PUMA Launches First South African Store', 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² PUMA Press Office, 'PUMA and Ghana', 1.

⁴³ PUMA Press Office, 'PUMA Wins', 1.

⁴⁴ PUMA Press Office, 'PUMA Launches First South African Store', 1.

⁴⁵ Peace One Day, Ltd, 'PUMA-POD'. Numerous PSA styled 30-second spots featuring African footballers were also produced, including one current Chelsea midfielder Michael Essien of Ghana. Spots were also produced titled 'Boy', which features a young African boy dreaming of scoring a game-winning goal, and one titled 'Soldier', which features two soldiers laying down their arms and instead kicking a ball around.

⁴⁶ For example, Zeitz's statement of wars stopping for sport, where those living in Iraq whilst the 2008 Olympics were ongoing would likely take issue with such a characterization.

⁴⁷ Nash, 'Global Citizenship', 174.

⁴⁸ Ibid., emphasis in original.

⁴⁹ O'Manique, and Labonte, 'Rethinking (Product)RED', 1563. As a side note, one could also make the argument that this 'desire to bring about change' through active civic participation was one of the key mobilizing factors driving Barack Obama's successful US presidential campaign, especially among young people who, perhaps for the first time in their lives, were energized about politics in an action-oriented way. For more on Obama's campaign, see Giardina, 'From Howard Dean'.

⁵⁰ Ponte and Richey, 'Better (RED)TM than Dead'.

⁵¹ Interview with Pierre Peyronnet. 'Samuel Eto'o Speaks to Pierre Peyronnet'.

⁵² The ad in question was produced by GYRO Worldwide, directed by Londoner Jake Nava (the same director of Beyonce's famed 'Crazy in Love' music video).

⁵³ Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, 14.

⁵⁴ Duggar, *Corporate Hegemony*, 33.

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